

**1380**

**CANTERBURY TALES**

**THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE**

**Geoffrey Chaucer**

**Chaucer, Geoffrey (1343-1400) - English poet, known as the most important writer of Middle English. His Canterbury Tales (~1380) are told by traveling pilgrims who meet at a tavern and have a storytelling contest to pass the time.**

**Each tale is preceded by an introductory prologue. The Franklin's Prologue- Introduces the Franklin, a rich landlord who loves to eat.**

**THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE**

These ancient gentle Bretons, in their days,  
Of divers high adventures made great lays  
And rhymed them in their primal Breton tongue,  
The which lays to their instruments they sung,  
Or else recited them where joy might be;  
And one of them have I in memory,  
Which I shall gladly tell you, as I can.  
But, sirs, because I am an ignorant man,  
At my beginning must I first beseech  
You will excuse me for my vulgar speech;  
I never studied rhetoric, that's certain;  
That which I say, it must be bare and plain.  
I never slept on Mount Parnassus, no,  
Nor studied Marcus Tullius Cicero.  
Colours I know not, there's no doubt indeed,  
Save colours such as grow within the mead,  
Or such as men achieve with dye or paint.  
Colours of rhetoric I find but quaint;  
My spirit doesn't feel the beauty there.  
But if you wish, my story you shall hear."

**HERE ENDS THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE**